

Birds

(The distribution reflects a species' entire range and does not discriminate between breeding and nonbreeding areas.)

Black Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte atrata*)
Species of Greatest Inventory Need

State Rank: S2
Global Rank: G4

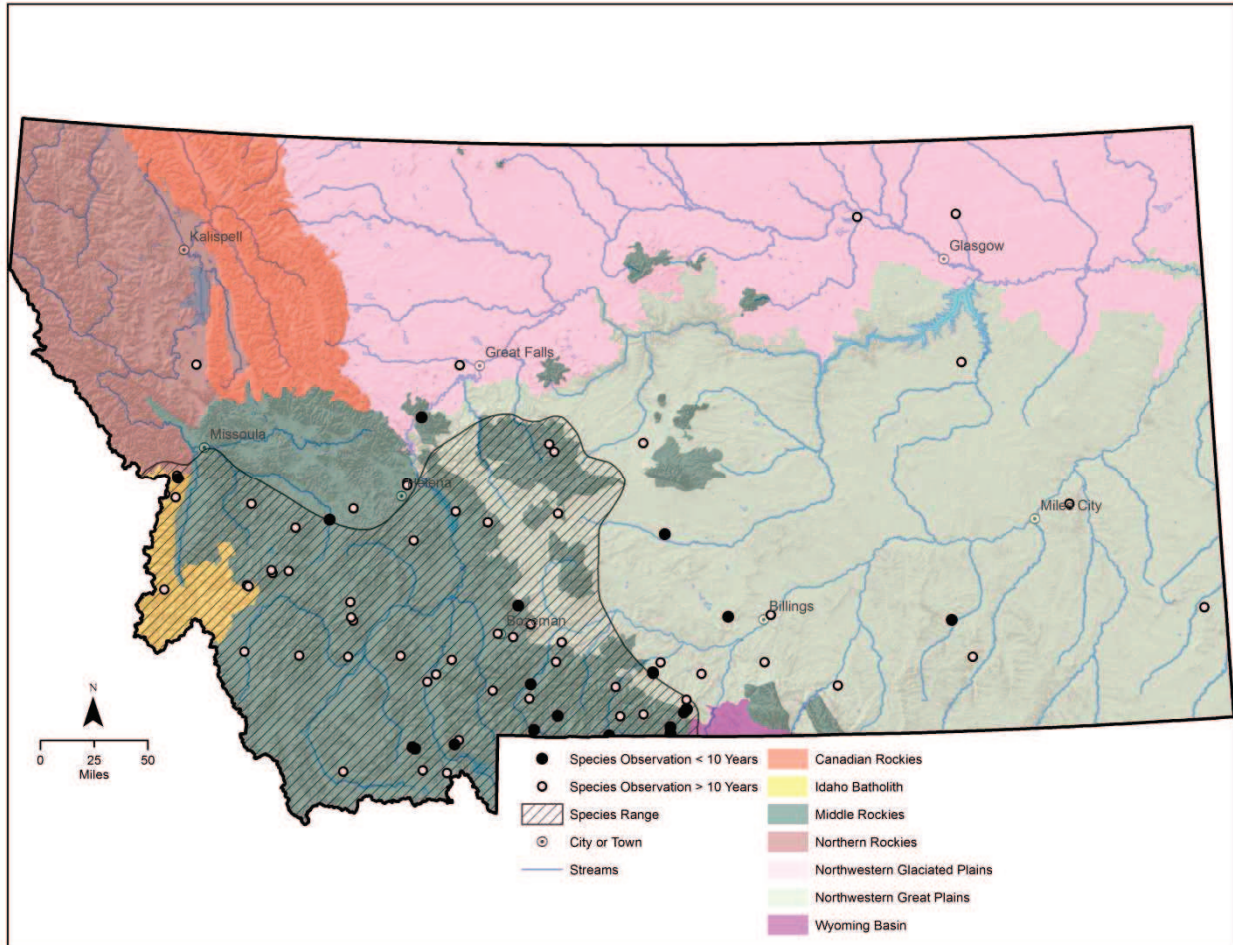


Figure 26. Montana range and observations of the black rosy-finch

Habitat

Habitat use in Montana has not been studied, but is similar to other regions (P. Hendricks personal observation), where black rosy-finches are known to nest in crevices in cliffs and talus among glaciers and snowfields above timberline (also possibly in abandoned buildings above treeline) and forage in barren, rocky or grassy areas adjacent to the nesting sites; in migration and winter they also occur in open situations, fields, cultivated lands, brushy areas, and around human habitation (American Ornithologists Union 1998, Johnson 2002). They may roost in mine shafts or similar protected sites. During some winters individuals move out onto the shortgrass and mid-grass prairies to feed (Hendricks and Swenson 1983, Johnson 2002).

Management Plan

Casey, D. 2000. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan Montana. 279 pp.

Black Rosy-Finch Current Impacts, Future Threats, and Conservation Actions

Current Impacts	Future Threats	Conservation Actions
<p>Data poor - inadequate monitoring</p> <p>Outdated survey</p>		<p>Encourage citizen data collection in winter & data entry via Ebird or other appropriate publicly shared outlets</p> <p>Examine Christmas Bird Count data for trends in wintering populations</p> <p>Set up and periodically run alpine bird surveys during the breeding season to monitor changes in distribution and population</p> <p>Search for winter roost sites - determine if they need protection (e.g. open mine shafts)</p> <p>Target species for survey and inventory</p> <p>Use location data and habitat layer to derive a list of high priority breeding sites to visit</p>
Human disturbance	Human disturbance	<p>If winter roost sites are identified as threatened by human activities consider management options (e.g. gate mine shafts instead of sealing them)</p>
	Climate change	<p>Continue to evaluate current climate science models and recommended actions</p> <p>Monitor habitat changes and address climate impacts through adaptive management as necessary</p> <p>Routine monitoring of known populations</p>
	Wind energy development	<p>Follow recommendations in FWP's <i>Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Wind Energy Development in Montana</i> (In prep)</p>

Additional Citations

American Ornithologists' Union. 1998. Check-list of North American birds. 7th edition. American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.

Hendricks, P. and J. Swenson. 1983. Dynamics of the winter distribution of Rosy Finches, *Leucosticte arctoa*, in Montana. Can. Field-Nat. 97(3): 307-310.

Johnson, R. E. 2002. Black Rosy-finch (*Leucosticte atrata*). Species Account Number 678. The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca, New York: Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/678/articles/introduction>

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. *In Prep.* Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Wind Energy Development in Montana.

Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*)
Species of Greatest Inventory Need

State Rank: S1B
Global Rank: G4

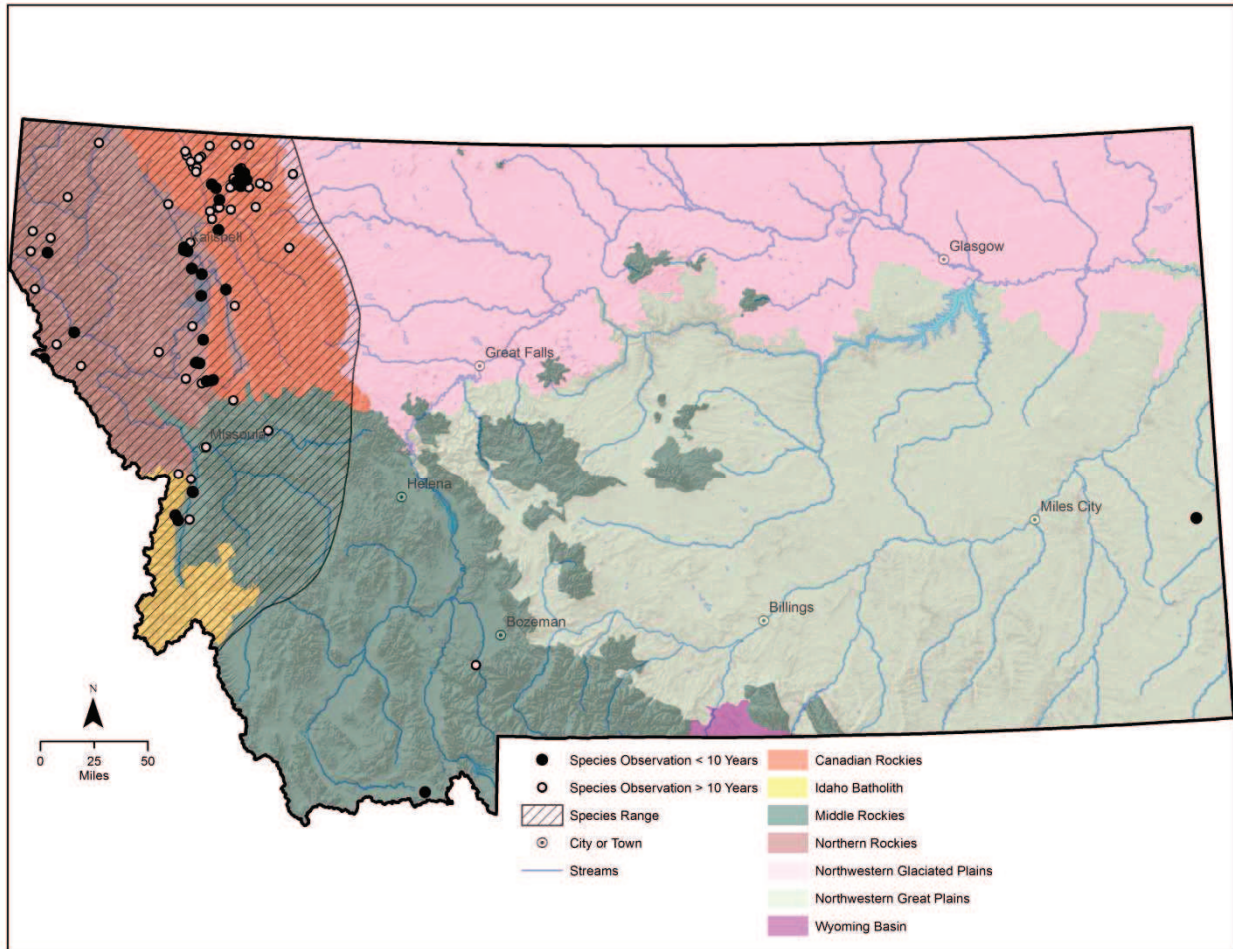


Figure 27. Montana range and observations of the black swift

Habitat

No specific information regarding black swift habitat exists for Montana. Information from other regions indicates they forage over forests and in open areas. They nest behind or next to waterfalls and wet cliffs (Michael 1927, Knorr 1961, Foerster and Collins 1990), on sea cliffs and in sea caves (Vrooman 1901, Legg 1956), and occasionally in limestone caves (Davis 1964). Nests are located in dark, inaccessible sites with an unobstructed flight path (Knorr and Knorr 1990). Nest site persistence and tenacity is almost absolute (Knorr and Knorr 1990). The nest is a cup-like structure of mud, mosses and algae.

Management

No active management currently is in place for black swifts in Montana. Although decreases in water flow and increased recreational use in areas where black swifts nest, or are thought to nest, should be discouraged (Casey 2000).

Management Plan

Casey, D. 2000. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan Montana. 279 pp.

Black Swift Current Impacts, Future Threats, and Conservation Actions

Current Impacts	Future Threats	Conservation Actions
Data poor - very few breeding records Lacks a baseline survey		Develop a list of potential waterfall nesting sites and survey Microhabitats suitable for black swifts need to be identified, mapped, and surveyed Monitor site occupancy periodically to determine trends Target species for survey and inventory
Altered stream flows due to upstream impacts	Altered stream flows due to upstream impacts	Encourage watershed management practices upstream of suitable waterfalls to maintain habitat quality throughout the nesting season
Dewatering	Dewatering	If known nest sites or waterfalls with a high likelihood of being occupied are threatened by dewatering, work with upstream managers and water-rights holders to maintain adequate stream flows throughout the nesting season
Human disturbance at waterfall nesting sites	Increased recreation	Consider limiting access and certain types of activities when known to be disturbing to nest sites Evaluate human access at known nesting sites
Impacts to riparian zones	Impacts to riparian zones	Protect known and high probability nesting sites and streams
	Climate change	Continue to evaluate current climate science models and recommended actions Monitor habitat changes and address climate impacts through adaptive management as necessary Routine monitoring of known populations

Additional Citations

Casey, D. 2000. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan Montana. 279 pp.

Davis, D. G. 1964. Black Swifts nesting in a limestone cave in Colorado. Wilson Bull. 76:295-296.

Foerster, K. S. and C. T. Collins. 1990. Breeding distribution of the black swift in southern California. W. Birds 21:1-9.

Knorr, O. A. 1961. The geographical and ecological distribution of the black swift in Colorado. Wilson Bull. 73(2):155-170.

Knorr, O. A., and M. S. Knorr. 1990. The black swift in the Chiricahua Mountains of Arizona. Southwest Nat. 35:559-560.

Legg, K. 1956. A sea-cliff nest of the Black Swift. Condor 58:183-187.

Michael, C. M. 1927. Black Swift nesting in Yosemite National Park. Condor 29:89-97.

Vrooman, A. G. 1901. Discovery of the egg of the black swift (*Cypseloides niger borealis*). Auk 18:394-395.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*)

State Rank: S2B
Global Rank: G5

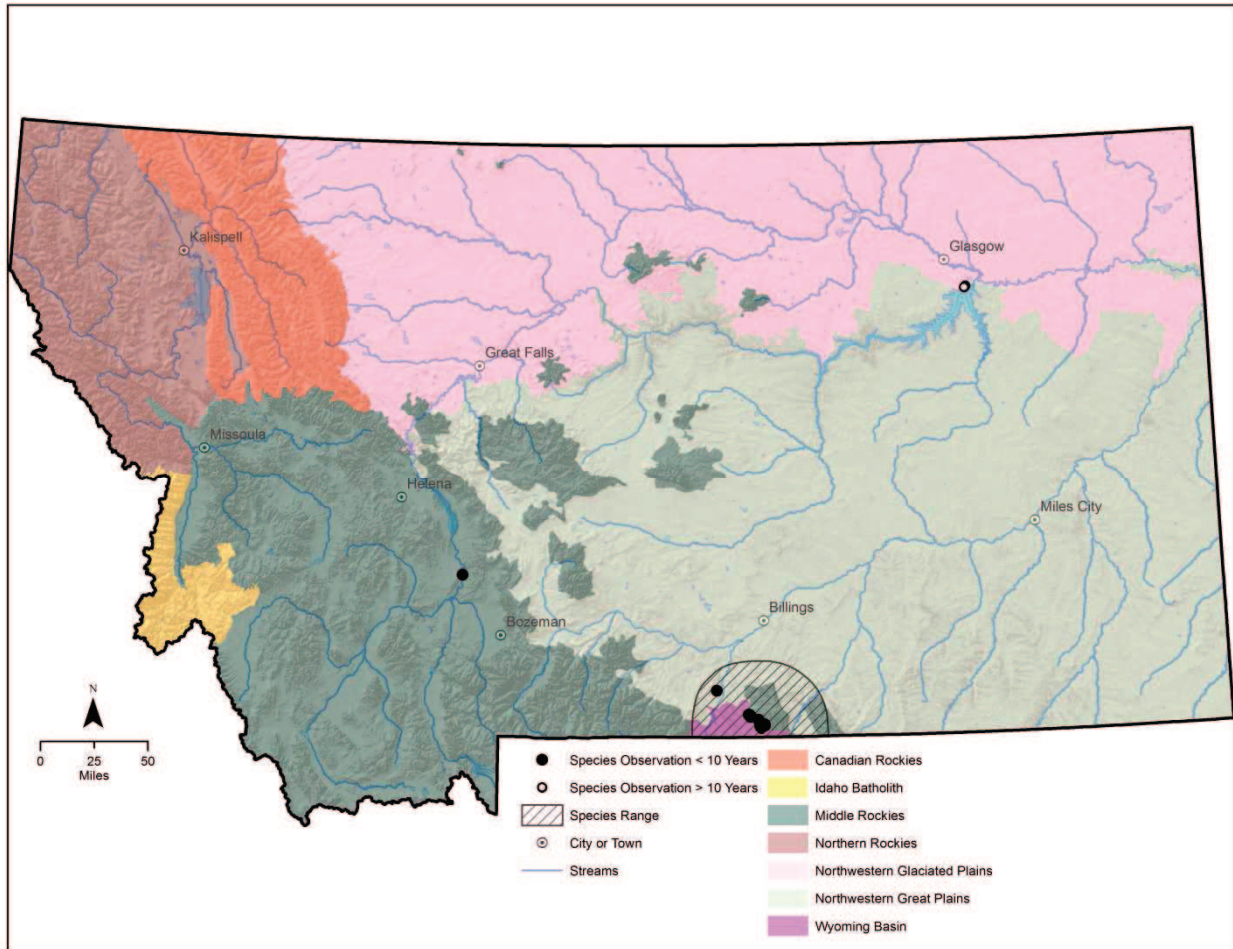


Figure 28. Montana range and observations of the blue-gray gnatcatcher

Habitat

Breeding habitat in Montana is restricted to open stands of Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) and limber pine (*Pinus flexilis*) with intermixed big sage (*Artemisia tridentata*). All nests found have occurred 2.5 to 5.5 feet above ground in Utah juniper or big sage growing on the lower slopes or bottoms of canyons (P. Hendricks unpublished data).

Throughout their range blue-gray gnatcatchers typically inhabit deciduous forest, riparian woodland, open woodland, second-growth, scrub, brushy areas and chaparral in the east, south, and coastal west (Tropical to lower Temperate zones) (American Ornithologists Union 1998, Ellison 1992). In the Great Basin region of the west they also occupy open pine woodland, where they are associated with rosaceous shrubs and rock outcrops (Pavlacky and Anderson 2001).

They nest especially where tracts of brush, scrub, or chaparral are intermixed with taller vegetation (e.g., forest edge, riparian corridors); nesting often occurs near water. Nests are built on branches or forks of trees or shrubs, usually 3.3 to 82 feet above ground (Harrison 1978) and

both sexes participate in nest construction. A broad range of brushy habitats is occupied during winter (Ellison 1992).

Management

No management activity is currently underway. Grazing may have a negative impact by directly or indirectly altering habitat for nesting and foraging. Nest parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds has recently been documented in Montana (P. Hendricks unpublished data).

This species is expanding its range northward and using existing bird survey efforts (e.g. Statewide Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions surveys) may help track this expansion. Targeted surveys still may be needed.

Management Plan

None.

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher Current Impacts, Future Threats, and Conservation Actions

Current Impacts	Future Threats	Conservation Actions
Brown-headed cowbird nest parasitism	Brown-headed cowbird nest parasitism	Monitor known breeding sites to determine status Monitor parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds
Poor grazing practices	Poor grazing practices	Work with landowners and land management agencies to ensure species needs are adequately addressed in grazing and RMPs
	Wildfire increase	Appropriate conservation action(s) unknown

Additional Citations

American Ornithologists' Union. 1998. Check-list of North American birds. 7th edition. American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C.

Ellison, Walter G. 1992. Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*). Species Account Number 023. The Birds of North America Online (A. Poole, Ed.). Ithaca, New York: Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology; <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna/species/023/articles/introduction>

Harrison, C. 1978. A field guide to the nests, eggs and nestlings of North American birds. Collins, Cleveland.

Pavlacky, D. C., and S. H. Anderson. 2001. Habitat preferences of pinyon-juniper specialists near the limit of their geographic range. Condor 103:322-331.

Caspian Tern (*Hydroprogne caspia*)

State Rank: S2B
Global Rank: G5

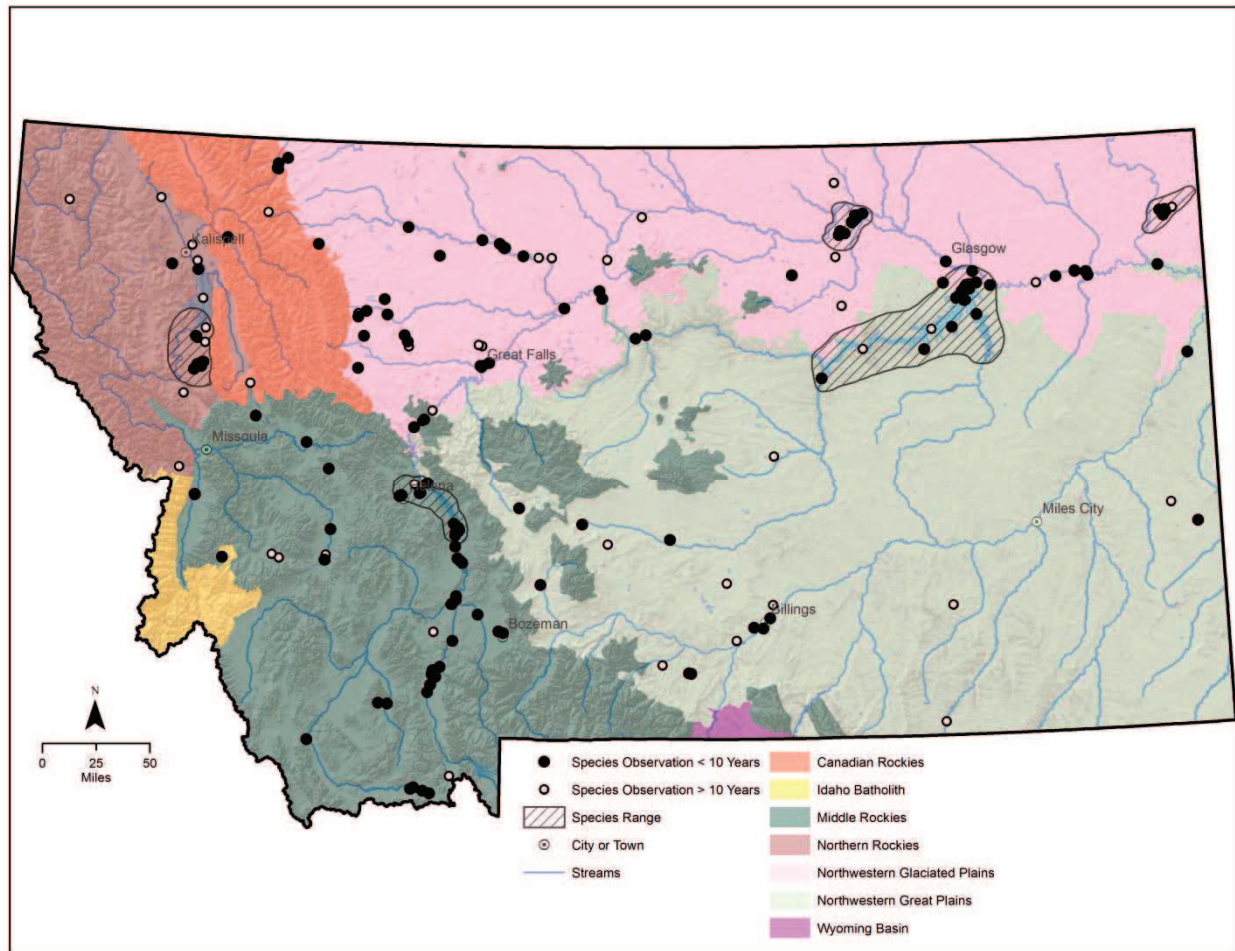


Figure 29. Montana range and observations of the Caspian tern

Habitat

In Montana, the Caspian tern prefers islands within large lakes or reservoirs, where sandy or stony beaches are used for nesting (Johnsgard 1986). The species has also been noted to utilize rivers, though nesting in this habitat is not documented (Johnsgard 1986, Casey 2000).

Management

No management activities specific to Caspian tern in Montana are documented, however, management recommendations include surveying known nesting colonies on an annual basis to determine status; providing adequate levels of water to protect nesting terns from mammalian predators; managing water levels on lake and river nesting areas to mimic natural seasonal fluctuations; and minimizing human disturbance at nesting colonies during the breeding season (Casey 2000).

Management Plan

Casey, D. 2000. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan Montana. 279 pp.

Caspian Tern Current Impacts, Future Threats, and Conservation Actions

Current Impacts	Future Threats	Conservation Actions
Human disturbance	Human disturbance	Minimize human disturbance at nesting colonies during the breeding season
Inter-species competition	Inter-species competition	Survey known and potential nesting areas annually to determine status
	Climate change	<p>Continue to evaluate current climate science models and recommended actions</p> <p>Manage water levels on lake and river nesting areas so as not to flood nest sites</p> <p>Monitor habitat changes and address climate impacts through adaptive management as necessary</p> <p>Provide adequate water levels to protect nesting islands from mammalian predators</p> <p>Routine monitoring of known populations</p>

Additional Citations

Casey, D. 2000. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan Montana. 279 pp.

Johnsgard, P. A. 1986. Birds of the Rocky Mountains with particular reference to national parks in the Northern Rocky Mountain region. Colorado Associated University Press, Boulder.

Chestnut-collared Longspur (*Calcarius ornatus*)

State Rank: S2B
Global Rank: G5

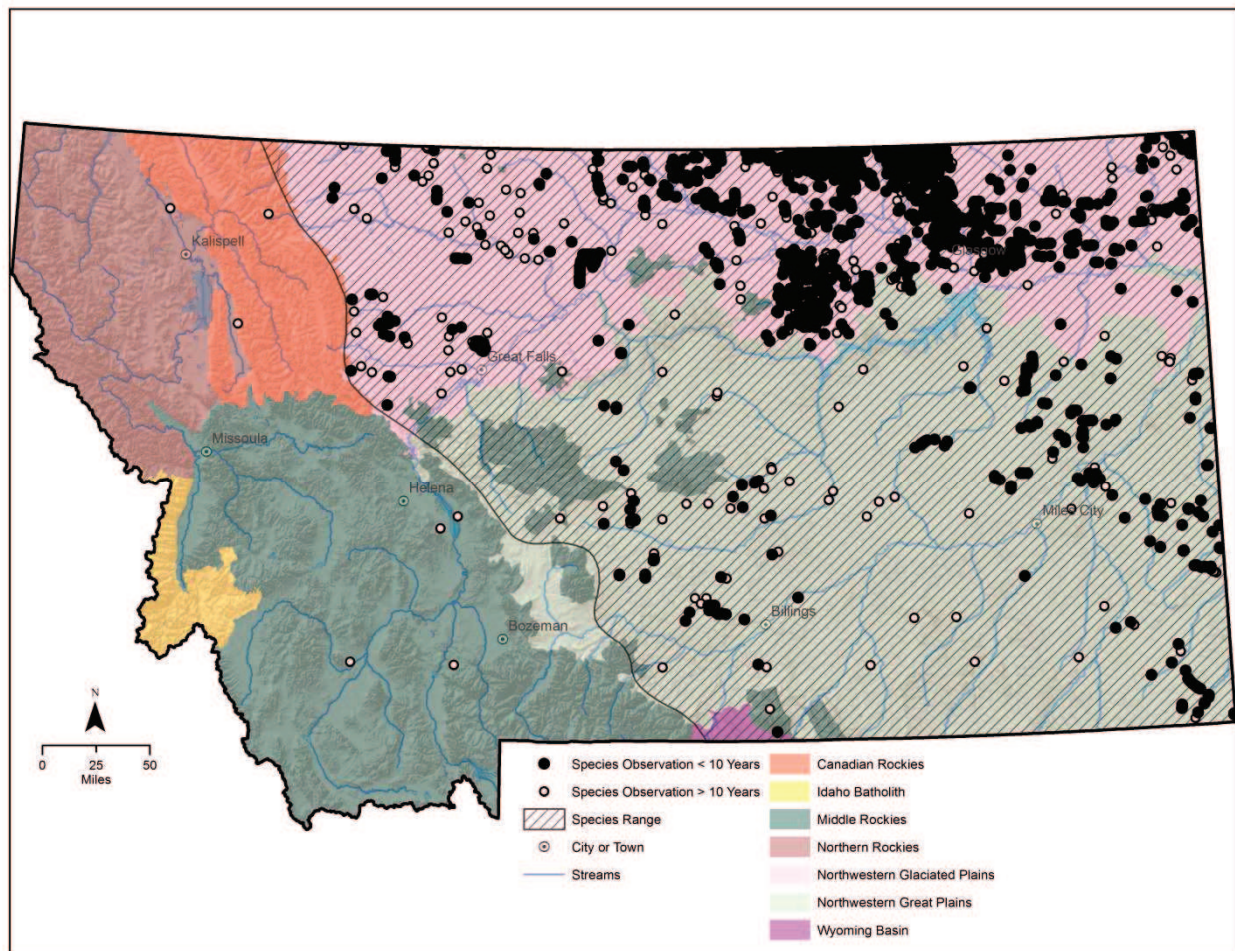


Figure 30. Montana range and observations of the chestnut-collared longspur

Habitat

Species prefers short-to-medium grasses that have been recently grazed or mowed. This species prefers native pastures.

Management

This species is one of several that is monitored under the Statewide Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions surveys (Hanni et al. 2011).

Management Plan

Casey, D. 2000. Partners in Flight Bird Conservation Plan Montana. 279 pp.

Chestnut-collared Longspur Current Impacts, Future Threats, and Conservation Actions

Current Impacts	Future Threats	Conservation Actions
Habitat conversion	Habitat conversion	<p>Protect grasslands that are at highest risk of conversion to cropland through the use of easements and where possible fee acquisition</p> <p>Provide incentives to maintain grazed grasslands over conversion to croplands</p> <p>Work with landowners and land management agencies to limit activities that may be detrimental to this species</p>
Lack of grazing to create favorable structure	Lack of grazing to create favorable structure	<p>Implement grazing management that creates heterogeneous structure, with emphasis of mid to shorter stature vegetation on a yearly basis</p> <p>Reduce tall, thick vegetation</p> <p>Work with landowners and land management agencies to ensure species needs are adequately addressed in grazing and RMPs</p>
	Oil and gas exploration and extraction	<p>Follow recommendations in FWP's <i>Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Oil and Gas Development in Montana</i> (In prep)</p> <p>Monitor population trends via <i>Breeding Bird Surveys</i> and <i>Statewide Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions</i> (Hanni et al. 2011) surveys</p>
	Wind energy development	<p>Follow recommendations in FWP's <i>Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Wind Energy Development in Montana</i> (In prep)</p>

Additional Citations

Hanni, D. J., C. M. White, R. A. Sparks, J. A. Blakesley, J. J. Birek, N. J. Van Lanen, and J. A. Fogg. 2011. Field protocol for spatially-balanced sampling of landbird populations. Unpublished report. Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, Brighton, Colorado

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. *In Prep.* Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Oil and Gas Development in Montana.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. *In Prep.* Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Wind Energy Development in Montana.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch (*Leucosticte tephrocotis*)
 Species of Greatest Inventory Need

State Rank: S2B, S5N
 Global Rank: G5

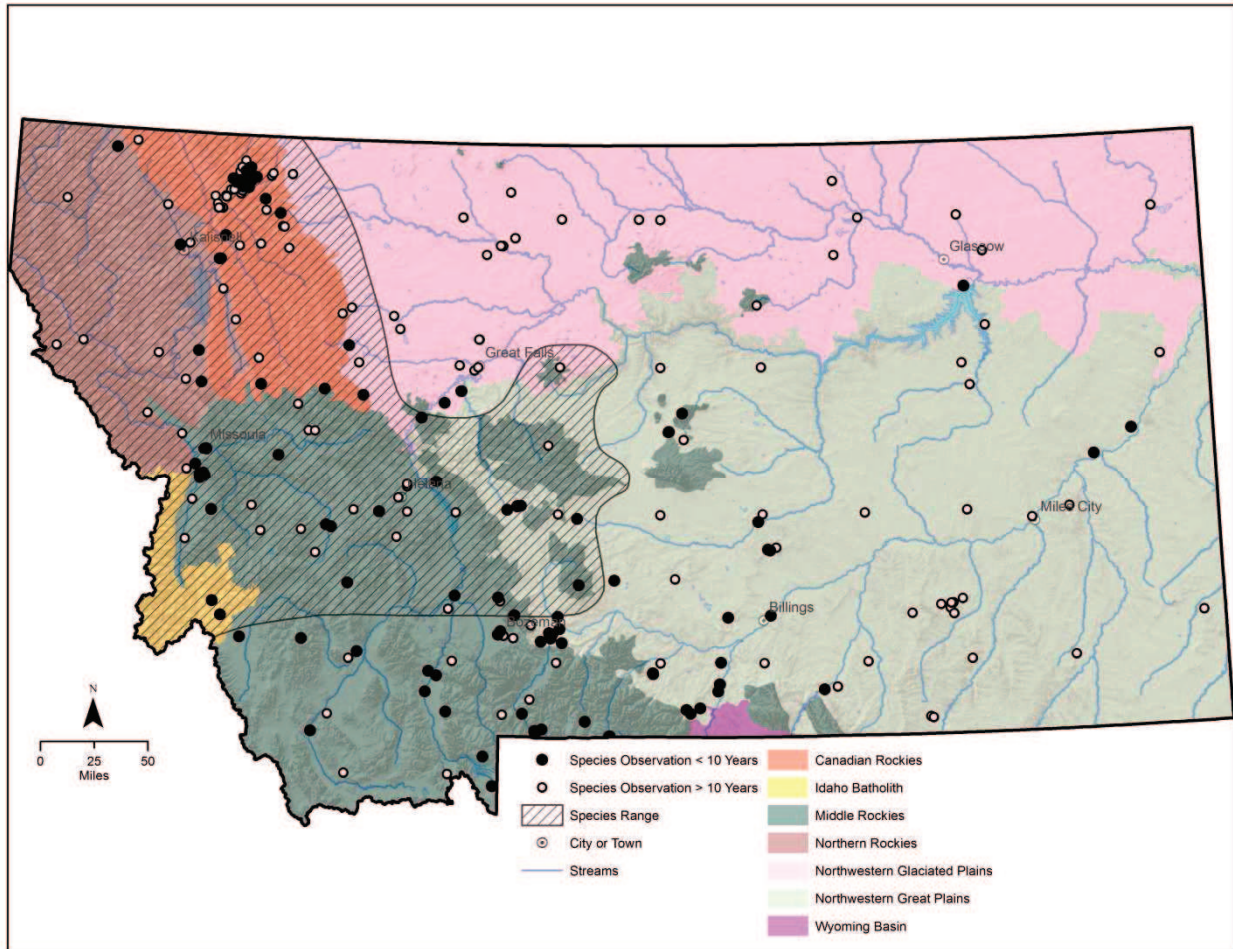


Figure 31. Montana range and observations of the gray-crowned rosy-finch

Habitat

Breeding, nesting, and winter roosting habitat in Montana is similar to other regions in the species' range (Johnson 1965, Hendricks 1981). Gray-crowned rosy-finches nest in crevices in cliffs and talus among glaciers and snowfields above timberline (also in abandoned buildings above treeline) and forage in barren, rocky or grassy areas adjacent to the nesting sites; in migration and winter they also occur in open situations, fields, cultivated lands, brushy areas, and around human habitation. They may roost in mine shafts or similar protected sites. During some winters individuals move out onto the shortgrass and mid-grass prairies to feed (Hendricks and Swenson 1983, Swenson et al. 1988).

Management

No special management action appears to be required at this time, although traditional winter roosts in abandoned mine shafts should be protected and reclaimed using methods that allow continued access by the birds, if possible.

Management Plan

None.

Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch Current Impacts, Future Threats, and Conservation Actions

Current Impacts	Future Threats	Conservation Actions
Data poor - inadequate monitoring Lacks a baseline survey		Determine where the Montana nesting populations over winter Encourage citizen data & data entry via Ebird or other appropriate publicly shared outlets Examine Christmas Bird Count data for trends in wintering populations Search for winter roost sites - determine if they need protection (e.g. open mine shafts) Set up and periodically run alpine bird surveys during the breeding season to monitor changes in distribution and population Target species for survey and inventory
Human disturbance	Human disturbance	If winter roost sites are identified as threatened by human activities consider management options (e.g. gate mine shafts instead of sealing them)
	Climate change	Continue to evaluate current climate science models and recommended actions Monitor habitat changes and address climate impacts through adaptive management as necessary Routine monitoring of known populations
	Wind energy development	Follow recommendations in FWP's <i>Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Wind Energy Development in Montana</i> (In prep)

Additional Citations

Hendricks, P. 1981. Observations on a winter roost of Rosy Finches in Montana. J. Field Ornithol. 52:235-236.

Hendricks, P. and J. Swenson. 1983. Dynamics of the winter distribution of Rosy Finches, *Leucosticte arctoa*, in Montana. Can. Field-Nat. 97(3): 307-310.

Johnson, R. E. 1965. Reproductive activities of rosy finches, with special reference to Montana. Auk 82:190-205.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. *In Prep.* Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Wind Energy Development in Montana.

Swenson, J. E., K. C. Jensen and J. E. Toepfer. 1988. Winter movements by Rosy Finches in Montana. J. Field Ornithol., 59(2): 157-160.